



Eager Beavers Nursery Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	143016
Inspection date	13 February 2007
Inspector	Claire Sheldrake
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Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Eager Beavers Nursery Group opened in 1989. It is a private group which operates from the St. Johns Ambulance Hall in Street, Somerset. The group has use of one large room and an adjoining room to the rear. There is a kitchen, toilets, cloakroom area and a small fully enclosed car park, used for outside play.

There are currently 36 children aged from two to five years on roll. This includes 12 funded three year olds and five funded four year olds. No children have been identified with special needs, and no children speak English as an additional language.

Eager Beavers Nursery Group is registered for a maximum of 26 children aged two to five years. They operate from 09.15 to 12.15 with an optional lunch session offered until 13.10. A shorter session from 09.30 to 11.30 is offered for two year olds.

The group are open Monday to Friday term time only.

An experienced team of nine members of staff, work together for a variety of sessions, four of these hold a level 3 qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn to understand simple good health and hygiene procedures. They are familiar with hand washing routines after craft activities, and are becoming increasingly confident in managing their own toileting needs. Tissues are readily available and staff remind children to cover their mouth when coughing, to reduce the risk of cross infection.

Children are finding out about a healthy diet. They have studied food topics, tried new foods and helped to chop vegetables and fruits. The nursery has posters in the play room highlighting good choices of diet, and the children are offered a fresh healthy snack during the session. Drinking water is available at all times, for children to help themselves, if they become thirsty.

Staff follow good health and hygiene procedures to ensure children's health is maintained. They provide a clean environment, using anti bacterial sprays on tables, before and after eating, and the bathrooms are regularly cleaned. Documentation, such as consent forms, accident and medication records are available and are signed, this makes sure that parents are fully informed of the care given to their children.

Children have good access to physical activities to meet their needs. They are able to move confidently around when outside, balancing on bikes and scooters, and pushing prams. They enjoy climbing on large equipment and along balance beams, when set up in the hall. They enjoy running around and diving under the parachute and doing music and movement.

The children are developing their hand-eye coordination skills when using tools and materials. They explore and delight in shaping, rolling and moulding the play dough. They use scissors and mark making implements with increasing control and carefully manage small construction activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and suitable environment where there is sufficient space for them to play. The hall is bright and welcoming and the tables are set up in an appealing way for children.

Children's safety is promoted. The front door of the hall is kept locked, and the rear door has an alarm fitted to alert staff if it is opened. All the parents are greeted at the door on arrival, so that staff are certain which child they are collecting.

The premises are well maintained, and a visual risk assessment is carried out before each session, however this is not currently recorded in written form. Children use safe and suitable toys and equipment and these all appear to be in good working order. Staff regularly check the toys for breakages, wear and tear, or sharp edges.

Children are well supervised both inside and out. The staff are well deployed in both play rooms, to ensure children play safely and cooperatively, whilst encouraging them to be independent. Outside the children are supervised by two members of staff at all times.

The children are protected from the risk of fire, because staff are aware of the evacuation procedure and fire drills are carried out. A fire log is kept, however it does not include entries for each half term, which is stated within their fire policy.

The small outdoor area used by the children is enclosed by large gates, and is checked for risks before it is used.

Children are safeguarded through staff knowledge of child protection. Staff are confident in their role of reporting any causes for concern to the relevant agencies.

Children are learning about being safe and protected. They are introduced to rules and boundaries and are learning about what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. They have formed good relationships with each other and with the staff, and are beginning to develop small friendship groups.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are settled with in the group and are beginning to develop social skills. They are learning about managing their own care, they dress up, using buttons and zips, and put on their coats before going out to play. They are interested in the toys set out for them and are attracted to the craft tables. Children are well engaged at the beginning of the session.

Children have opportunities to hear the spoken word, staff constantly answer children's questions and respond well, enriching children's language and conversation. There is a good selection of books available for the children to look at. They listen to a favourite book at story time and enthusiastically join in with songs and rhymes.

Nursery Education

Children are interested, keen and excited in their play. They are confident, and are able to sit and concentrate well to activities, especially at the craft table.

The children interact well with each other, and most engage in conversation, using language in their games in the home corner, and with the train set. Staff extend the children's vocabulary by introducing new words in conversation, and encourage the quieter children to join in. Children have the chance to link sounds with letters, as they join in with songs, identifying the sound and letter at the beginning of their name.

Children handle books confidently, there is a variety on offer and they are encouraged to choose a book to take home each day.

Some of the children attempt to write their own name in a workbook or on their pictures. There are regular opportunities for children to mark make, pens and pencils are laid out on different tables around both rooms.

Children use weighing bears and the scales, introducing them to early maths skills and problem solving. They compare how many bears it takes to make it balance and tip. Children join in with counting numbers after story time up to 10, however there are no opportunities for children who felt confident to count on further.

Children explore objects using items such as a magnifying glass, and follow life cycles of nature in topic work. The children build from a selection of construction toys. They fit pieces together to make towers and models.

The children are able to find out about everyday technology using toys, such as a leap frog learning computer, a globe, and phones and a kettle in the home corner.

Children have regular opportunities to extend their physical skills, they can balance and climb on the apparatus in the hall and can scoot or ride on bikes in the outside area.

Children are able to participate in organised craft activities, introducing them to colour, texture and shape. They are able to use a variety of materials in creative play and these include chalk, play dough and sticking. Activities are usually linked to the topic of the week and are well supervised.

Musical instruments are available for children to experience sound and rhythm, they join in with simple songs and enjoy listening to familiar song tapes. They enjoy imaginative play using the home corner, dressing up clothes, and joining in with exercise movements, such as running on the spot.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Staff interact well with the children and help them to make progress in their learning. They provide times for children to work in a small group with a member of staff to play a game or do a workbook. This time does however clash with outside playtime, and children often choose to go outside instead.

Staff manage the children's behaviour well on the whole, they are consistent and responsive to the children, and defuse situations before they blow up. However during the morning the children's level of engagement can change, and sometimes this can lead to behaviour deteriorating.

Staff have knowledge of the early learning goals and the Foundation Stage, they have developed a set of topics and plans using the Scholastic learning pack. The planning is effective and identifies an understanding of the early learning goals, however any evaluation links or monitoring of the outcome are not recorded appropriately.

Staff make observations of the children, but clear assessment records of the children's progress are not consistently recorded. This is not a measurable way of monitoring children's progress, because it does not clearly identify where a child starts, where they are now, and if there are any areas of concern.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to make a positive contribution to the group, by joining in with the activities, sharing the toys and being considerate of one another. The children are able to enjoy focused craft activities with a member of staff or self select from favourite toys set out on tables and the floor. The children are familiar with the daily routines, and listen well when they are given the count down to tidying up. They all take part in this activity and the children assist the staff putting all the toys back in the boxes, before sitting together for a story.

Children are learning about managing their own behaviour. Staff help children to do this, by being aware and responsive. They step in to support the children to apologise to each other and to defuse the situation. Children use good manners at snack time, and thank the child who is giving out the biscuits and fruits.

Children are becoming aware of the world around them. They use an electronic globe to find Africa. This is where the character in one of their topic books lives, and they have found out about different cultures and lifestyles. A good selection of multi-cultural story and reference books are displayed for children to look through at any time. The children are learning about using a second language and they all join in counting to 10 in French.

The children are able to enjoy outings in their own community and have walked to places of interest and collected leaves for craft activities from the local park.

Children with special needs are identified and monitored. Good staff ratios allow children to be well supported and integrated in all areas of the group.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are confident, expressive and feel settled in the group.

Partnerships with parents are satisfactory.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in the group, they support fund raising events, and are kept informed about the setting and its provision by a regular newsletter.

At the end of each session a member of staff is available for parents to discuss details of how their child has been during the morning. Each child has a key worker who has responsibility for them, and parents are aware that they can ask for time to talk to them about their child.

Parents are made aware of nursery routines and activities by information on the notice board. However they are given limited information about the Foundation Stage and the children's learning, and their progress towards the early learning goals.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the daily session provides children with the opportunity to enjoy free play, listen to a story, join in with singing and physical activities. There are also times for focused group work with a member of staff, to play a game or complete a workbook.

The staff work closely with the children and good ratios are well maintained. Children receive plenty of one to one attention and support, and this helps new children to settle and be confident.

The children's attendance is recorded to ensure their safety, however children are not involved in this registration process.

Children's needs are met with the use of a suitable collection of documents which support each child. These have been set up in partnership with parents to ensure that all parties are in agreement.

The quality of leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory.

The management and staff have worked together as an established team for many years, and are familiar with their roles in the running of the group. The team are experienced in caring for children, some are first aid trained, and four of them hold level 3 childcare qualifications. An operational plan states the aims of the group, and supports how the group are committed to meeting the individual needs of the children.

At present the setting does not have a clear way of monitoring the progress children are making, towards the early learning goals. Staff know the children well, and demonstrate an understanding of their key worker children, however progress is not recorded consistently, and is not linked, to enable staff to track how children develop.

The staff are not currently offered the opportunity of an appraisal system, to highlight areas of individual strengths and weaknesses, or a development plan to include training wishes, however the management state that this is soon to be implemented.

At the beginning of each session, a group time is set aside for staff to discuss the morning ahead, however there are no regular staff meetings to develop group planning, progress records and evaluation.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children that attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the group was asked to develop their organisation and grouping of children to maximise staff deployment, time and resources. This has been addressed and staff deployment is good and supervision is adequate.

The first aid box is now located in the kitchen and is within easy reach of the staff.

A sufficiently detailed record of significant issues and incidents is now kept and it can be shared with parents. The group have ensured that information about allergies and dietary requirements form part of the standard information held on all children and that Ofsted's name and address is available to parents on the complaints procedure as the regulatory body.

At the previous nursery education inspection the group was asked to develop an assessment system, recording the children's progress along the stepping stones. This remains ongoing, and although some information is recorded, it is not measurable or consistent.

They were also asked to develop systems for planning which are linked to children's assessments, to cover all areas of children's learning, and extend activities for the more able children. This also remains an ongoing project and staff are looking at adapting their current planning and introducing assessment which is linked to children's learning, to meet the needs of all the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted, that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- make sure regular fire drills are carried out and recorded

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop children's assessments, to plot progress and make links with the early learning goals. Use these assessments to help children move to the next stage of their learning

- ensure parents are well informed about their children's progress and achievements
- ensure staff have access to staff appraisals, development and training

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk